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ABSTRACT

The practicum described in this paper used an eclectic approach to promote word meaning vocabulary growth in 14 fourth-grade students from an urban elementary school who had scored below 74% on a vocabulary pretest. Students were tutored once or twice a week for a 10-week period with direct vocabulary instruction, utilizing semantic mapping and semantic feature analysis, and the promotion of wide reading. In addition, a program called the "Word Search Adventure," designed by the researcher, was used to monitor each student's progress and to motivate participation. Results indicated an average increase of 64% on the vocabulary posttest, and also showed that the strategies utilized improved the below average student's word meaning vocabulary in the content areas. Results further indicated that external incentives alone were not sufficient in increasing all students' independent reading at home, and that additional strategies need to be incorporated. (Two tables of data are included; 4 appendixes--the pretest, posttest, "Word Search Adventure," and practicum timeline--and 20 references are attached.) (Author/PRA)

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IMPROVING FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS' WORD MEANING VOCABULARIES IN THE CONTENT AREAS THROUGH AN ECLECTIC APPROACH

by

Stella Summers

A Practicum Report

submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education at Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

December 10,1991

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Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Signed Stella Summers

Abstract

Improving Fourth Grade Students' Word Meaning Vocabularies In the Content Areas Through An Eclectic Approach
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Descriptors: Vocabulary Development/ Vocabulary Skills/ Content Area Reading/ Elementary Education/ Reading Instruction/ Reading Comprehension/ Reading Skills

This report presents an eclectic approach to promote word meaning vocabulary growth. The target group consisted of 14 fourth grade students from an urban elementary school. All students scored between the twentieth and fortieth percent on a national assessment test and below 74 percent on a vocabulary pretest. The researcher worked on a tutorial basis with the group one to two times weekly for a ten week period. The project included direct vocabulary instruction, utilizing the methods Semantic Mapping and Semantic Feature Analysis and the promotion of wide reading. The Word Search Adventure, designed by the researcher, was used to monitor each student's progress in addition to motivating participation. An average increase of 64 percent was made on the vocabulary posttest. Based on the results the writer concluded that the strategies utilized can improve the below average student's word meaning vocabulary in the content areas. Also determined was that external incentives alone were not sufficient in increasing all students' independent reading at home and that additional strategies need to be incorporated. Appendices include a timeline, The Word Search Adventure booklet, and the vocabulary pre and post tests.

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

Reading comprehension becomes of utmost importance to the intermediate student in the elementary school. At this time, the skills learned in the primary elementary years are put into practice as the ability to read in the content areas becomes necessary for success in school. In addition, this is the beginning age at which students are required to increase word meaning vocabularies by substantial numbers. Research consistently correlates word meaning ability with reading comprehension scores.

The researcher is an elementary school teacher who worked on a tutorial basis, providing assistance to incoming fourth grade students of an urban elementary school located in a southeastern state. The school has an enrollment of 592 students. The student membership consists of 67 percent Black, 19 percent White, and 13 percent Hispanic. The fourth grade consists of 60 percent Black, 25 percent White, and 15 percent Hispanic. The average fourth grade class size is 31. The school has 88 children served by the Chapter I Compensatory Education Program. Students with limited English proficiency amount to 2.4 percent of the population.

Over one-half of the students participate in the free and reduced lunch program. Two administrators, 14 classroom teachers, three exceptional student teachers, two teachers' aides, one guidance counselor, and one media specialist compose the school staff. Students have access to a library containing 6,030 usable books.

The researcher worked exclusively with two identified groups composed of members from two of the five, fourth grade classes. The groups were identified as having insufficient vocabularies as indicated by a researcher constructed vocabulary pretest and low reading comprehension scores on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT). The researcher worked on a volunteer basis for a period of 10 weeks, providing group tutorial services one or two days a week, for approximately 30 - 45 minutes daily, for each group. Consideration of the limited time the researcher had access to each group must be made, especially concerning its relationship to the limited degree of control over the situation in which changes will be introduced and attempted.

The researcher communicated closely with the assistant principal and received assistance in setting up the working situation. The author observed in each of the

teacher's classrooms. An attempt was made to work in conjunction with the regular classroom teachers, keeping close communications as to the nature of the research, procedures utilized, and ongoing progress made.

Problem Statement

There exists a direct correlation between a child's vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension ability. Cushenbery (1981:5) stated, "Since comprehension is, indeed, the end product of the reading process, all students must have adequate understanding of word meaning which might be used in any particular content area." As children enter the intermediate elementary grades emphasis is placed on developing a word meaning vocabulary. Chall, in Curtis, McKeown(1987), explained that this shift occurs when students are required to read content textbooks containing large numbers of unfamiliar words. Deficient word meaning vocabularies could have a direct affect on the students' performance and reading comprehension abilities in content area subjects. In addition Chall (1983:14) stated what may be another contributing factor within the target group, "Many surveys and research studies point to the fact that

certain children--children of low income families, minorities and bilinguals--have particular difficulty in meaning vocabulary development particularly at Grade four and beyond."

The fourth grade students that will be involved in this study have deficient word meaning vocabularies, the results of which are partially responsible for and reflected in the poor reading comprehension of the students. Students who scored within a range of twentieth to fortieth percentile on the Reading Comprehension subtest of the Stanford Achievement Test were selected for the project. Many of these students are operating at levels significantly lower than the average child but unfortunately have not scored low enough to be eligible for special programs available to low ability students. In addition, a content area vocabulary pretest (Appendix A:46) containing those words required for success in content subjects, as indicated by textbooks, county objectives, and teachers was administered and used as a screening device. The test is confined to testing specific topics within Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics subjects.

Students who scored 74 percent or below on the

vocabulary pretest and within the twentieth and fortieth percentile range on the S.A.T. were used as the target group. Two groups were formed from those students creating groups one and two. Group One students scored between the twentieth and thirtieth percentile on the S.A.T. and Group Two scored between the thirtieth and fortieth percentile. Group One students have scores that are slightly over those scores which would qualify them for the Compensatory Education Program. The participants are experiencing difficulty in the regular classroom, but are unable to receive special help. Group Two was used to compare the study's success with the different ability level students. The vocabulary pretest and posttest (Appendix B:50) comparison was used to interpret the results of the 10 week project.

In examining this vocabulary deficiency three contributing factors were identified while conducting observations of the classes and researching the subject. First, many of the students come from families within a low socio-economic group. A high possibility exists that the children involved have had limited enriching experiences in their environment during their prior years. Second, the possibility exists that minimal time

has been spent on independent silent reading and being read to orally. Third, it is questionable whether sufficient direct instruction of vocabulary has been provided in the students' classes and if the instruction followed certain suggested guidelines. Question also exists whether students have been provided with varied and numerous vocabulary activities. These factors could partially explain the limited vocabularies possessed by the study group.

A discrepency exists between the actual vocabularies possessed by the target group and vocabularies which would be adequate for beginning fourth grade students. The researcher attempted to increase the target groups' word meaning vocabulary in the content areas of Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics as demonstrated by the performance on a vocabulary pretest and posttest. Although it is not possible to fill the gap that exists in the target groups' vocabulary abilities in the time limit specified, the writer attempted to utilize strategies that could be continued throughout the school year which, if continued, might narrow the gap that exists.

Outcomes and Objectives

Increasing students' word meaning vocabulary requires that the students receive direct vocabulary instruction in conjunction with increasing the indirect learning experiences that promote vocabulary growth. The researcher therefore proposed the following objectives for the project:

1. After participation in the ten week project 80 percent of the students in Group One and Group Two will demonstrate increased knowledge in Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics content area vocabulary by scoring 75 percent or above on the vocabulary posttest.

2. After participation in the ten week project 80 percent of the students will show a 50 percent increase in time spent reading independently and/or being read to, as demonstrated by reading logs.

3. After participation in the ten week project 100 percent of the target group will have actively participated in the vocabulary activities semantic feature analysis and semantic mapping as measured by researcher observation.

4. After participation in the ten week project 100 percent of the students will have participated in direct learning experiences aimed at promoting increased vocabulary exposure, as measured by researcher observation.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

Introduction and Rational

Possessing an adequate word meaning vocabulary which allows comprehension of the written word to occur is necessary for successful participation in the content area subjects in the intermediate elementary grade levels and extends well beyond those school years. Harris and Sipay (1985:445) expressed,

> In our highly verbal culture an accurate understanding of the meaning of words is a necessary prerequisite for reading with meaning. A minimum essential for comprehension in reading is an understanding of the words used by the author. The development of a reading vocabulary, that is both extensive and accurate is necessary for good comprehension.

There exists a direct correlation between a person's word meaning vocabulary and the individual's ability to comprehend what is read. In reference to this widely accepted premise, Miller (1984:236) stated,

> Reading specialists agree that if a child is to be able to comprehend effectively what he or she reads, the child must have a good meaning vocabulary. Effective understanding of what is read always depends first on the reader's possession of many word meanings.

Dechant (1982) places word knowledge as the most significant factor for reading comprehension in the elementary and secondary school years. Regardless of the students' intellectual ability, making vocabulary training a high priority as a means to improving reading comprehension is warranted. "Developing word meaning is one of the teachers most important tasks", stated Dechant (1982:289). Vocabulary knowledge and the ability to understand the written text is so closely related that Chall in Curtis and McKeown (1987:11) when describing the relationship stated, "Indeed, word meaning scores are so highly correlated with reading comprehension scores that reading vocabulary test (word meaning) may be substituted for a paragraph meaning test."

Directly relating to the target group, Chall in Curtis and McKeown (1987:15) added, "Thus, although the problem of acquiring greater meaning vocabulary exists for all children, the need seems to be greater for minority children, and beginning at about Grade four." Fourth grade has special needs in this area as Blachowicz (1987:133) stated in reference to the choice of grade for the study conducted, "Fourth grade was chosen because so much of the "vocabulary explosion" begins when children

are called upon to "read to learn" in the middle grades..." Revealing the significance of vocabulary instruction in the content area subjects, Chall (1983:5) stated,

> If a student is to gain complete understanding of the material in a content area, he or she must be exposed to a well developed program of vocabulary enlargement in each and every subject area. This concept would demand that the teacher present new and unfamiliar words on a regular basis in each and every content lesson.

Heilman, Blair, Rupley (1986:398) stated, "Difficult words and concepts are introduced in the content textbooks in such profusion that many pupils are frustrated and often lost." No question exists as to the significance of attempting to develop extensive word meaning vocabulary in the content area subjects for the students.

Although experts agree on the importance of students acquiring knowledge of word meaning, differences arise as to the best way of obtaining those results. There exists two main opinions concerning how to increase students' ability in this area. The first advocates the direct and planned instruction of vocabulary. The second suggests that vocabulary does not need to be taught directly, but instead is acquired contextually while

reading. Chall in McKeown and Curtis (1987:11) cited,

> A classic study by Gray and Holmes (1938) asked a question that is as timely today as it was then - whether wide reading or a program of direct vocabulary instruction was more effective for vocabulary development. They found, for fourth graders, that direct instruction resulted in significantly larger gains on tests of vocabulary and comprehension...

In reference to this approach Chall in McKeown and Curtis (1987:56) added, " The positive effects of direct instruction were especially evident for the children of lower ability." Conversely, contextual learning emphasizes that word knowledge is gained naturally through independent wide reading. Nagy and Herman in Curtis and McKeown (1987:26) suggested that using the proposed time spent on direct vocabulary instruction instead on silent sustained reading would create larger gains in vocabulary. Chall (1983:15) concluded in reference to the approaches available, "It seems to me that the research points to the importance of both the contextual and the direct, both ways of teaching vocabulary are necessary." Since reading experts support both theories as capable of producing results, both of the recommended approaches, as suggested by Chall, were used by the researcher.

Solution Strategy

Three strategies incorporating both direct and contextual approaches to improve the vocabulary in the content area subjects of the target group were initiated. First, was to provide the target group with hands on learning experiences which, as a result of careful planning, fostered vocabulary growth. Second, was to initiate a program of direct vocabulary instruction incorporating semantic mapping and semantic feature analysis techniques, which utilizes the prior knowledge and experiences of the students to introduce new vocabulary. The instruction included the students in composing definitions in conjunction with being provided with many and varied activities to promote true ownership of those words. Finally, an attempt to increase the time the target group individuals spent on silent sustained reading and being read to aloud and increase their awareness of context clues. Together, the preceding strategies were incorporated into the practicum project.

Providing Background Experiences

"The first essential in a program of vocabulary development is to provide children with a background of meaningful experience" : Harris and Sipay (1985:449).

The direct relationship of children's experiences to that of vocabulary growth is exemplified in the statement of Harris and Sipay (1985:448),

> Words have meaning only when they are related to things one has experienced or knows about. Individuals who have been intellectually stimulated, exposed to a rich and varied vocabulary and to a variety of experiences, and who have had practice in the use of language are likely to know the meanings of a word. Those who have not had such experiences tend to have much smaller vocabularies.

Durkin (1983:241) added in regard to providing experiences to increase vocabulary knowledge, "...vocabulary does not automatically develop as a result of an experience. Rather, experiences must be deliberately linked with language,,,"

Although firsthand experiences such as fieldtrips and excursions are the best, Harris and Sipay (1985:449) suggested when these are not available, "...visual teaching materials such as movies, videotapes, filmstrips, slides, pictures, and charts are the best substitutes." Direct and vicarious experiences, audiovisual aids, and reading to students are all means suggested for teaching word meaning through experiences. Dupuis (1982:172) stated, "The first need is for teachers to plan concept teaching to make it as concrete as

possible, to provide as much first-hand experience with the actual concept as possible." To accomplish this task, hands on activities including experiments done in class and actual objects brought into class are recommended in addition to the vicarious methods mentioned previously. The importance of providing experiences to develop concepts to increase students' vocabulary is echoed among reading specialists of the past and present.

Direct Vocabulary Instruction

The second strategy was to teach vocabulary directly utilizing a process that relates past experiences and the knowledge gained through them to the new information being introduced. Two widely recommended instructional techniques for accomplishing this goal are semantic mapping and semantic feature analysis, as recommended by Nagy (1988) and Lapp, Farnan, Flood (1989). Nagy (1988:10) identified the quality of these methods and stated, "The first property of powerful vocabulary instruction is that it integrated instructed words with other knowledge" and added, "...we understand new information by relating it to what we already know."

Harris and Sipay (1985:466) stated,

> One of the vocabulary techniques that has been successful in improving reading comprehension involves teaching the words in the context of a unifying theme. This category clustered procedure helps pupils to understand the relationship among words and integrate them with prior knowledge.

In constructing a model for vocabulary instruction Nelson-Herber (1986:30) suggested the following points:

> 1. Vocabulary to be taught is selected and organized in clusters of words basic to the concept under consideration.
> 2. Concept clusters are presented in a framework that relates to and expands on what is already known by the students.
> 3. Vocabulary activities engage students in the construction of word meaning from context, experience, and reasoning.
> 4. Vocabulary activities engage students in small group interactive discussion of words and meanings.
> 5. Vocabulary expansion activities support students in acquiring meaning for the various words in the cluster.
> 6. Vocabulary refinement activities support the students in recognizing relationships between and among words in the cluster.
> 7. Vocabulary application activities support students in gaining control of concept cluster vocabulary in reading, writing, and speaking.

Pittelman and Johnson (1985:5) defined the first method, semantic mapping as, "a categorical structuring of information in graphic form. It is an individualized content approach in that students are required to relate new words to their own experiences and prior knowledge." This method can be used as a means of assessing the

students' background and introducing new concepts. Nagy (1988) described the steps in creating a semantic map. Initially a concept is introduced to the students . From that concept the students contribute ideas to create a composite list of related terms. Later those terms are categorized and provided with labels, creating a word map, all of which can be accomplished under the guidance and direction of the instructor. Devine (1986:85) explained in reference to semantic mapping,

> The free association of brainstorming is still done by the students but is controlled and organized by the teacher...The result is a semantic map; a diagram that presents visually the information elicited from the students, but in such a way that qualities and relationships are evident.

The second method, semantic feature analysis is similar to semantic mapping in that it integrates the students' prior knowledge with the new information. Semantic feature analysis is used when having groups of words that are closely related. Nagy (1988) explained the process involved. A list of related words is placed in a column. Then student suggested phrases, semantic features, that describe or distinguish the group of related words from one another are composed and placed along the top. In the intersecting squares of each word

and semantic feature, record is made as to whether this feature is applicable to that word or as to the extent it is related. Each square of the matrix is completed in a likewise manner. Semantic feature analysis directly correlates with item six in Herber's seven points because as Nagy (1988:14) explained, "Semantic feature analysis is one of the instructional methods that deals most explicitly with relationships among word meanings." Included in the Pittleman and Johnson (1985) project to investigate the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction was the expressed need for vocabulary instruction to include the types of activities discussed. Although a priority for teaching vocabulary in the school was observed by them, Pittleman and Johnson (1985:13) revealed,

> Little emphasis was given to meaning-based instructional activities, particularly those that relate new vocabulary to prior knowledge and experience. Furthermore completion of workbook pages continues to be a major instructional activity at the expense of discussion and classification.

Blachowicz (1987:135) also revealed the results of a study showing that although students were receiving direct vocabulary instruction, the overall goal in the fourth grade class "...was to develop discrete word

meanings rather than to develop vocabulary related to the conceptual framework of the selection..." Both semantic mapping and semantic feature analysis provides opportunities for rich class and group discussions and inherent in the processes are provisions for making the types of relationships suggested when providing students with vocabulary instruction.

The teaching process continues by providing ways in which the students can hear these new words being used, read them in various printed materials, and use them in classroom discussions and written assignments. Nagy (1988:31) stated, "Vocabulary instruction must therefore ensure not only that readers know what the word means, but also that they have had sufficient practice to make its meaning quickly and easily accessible during reading." This is accomplished by providing meaningful ways in which the words can be used and practiced. The goal is to develop an understanding of the words and an ability to use them intelligently instead of merely memorizing definitions. Nagy (1988:32) stated,

> Effective vocabulary instruction requires students to process words meaningfully - that is, make inferences based on their meaning - and includes tasks that are in some ways parallel to normal speaking, reading, and writing.

Cushenbery (1981) suggested having students use words in short essays, composing and presenting short class talks, keeping a vocabulary notebook of new words, constructing bulletin boards using the words, looking for the new words in the environment, and completing crossword puzzles containing the words. Extension activities must follow the instruction, as Kapinus (1987:3) states, "Introducing a new word begins with the definition and moves from there to activities that help students gain ownership of the word." Providing direct vocabulary instruction, adequate practice, and meaningful opportunities to use the new words were the writer's aims.

Wide Reading for Contextual Vocabulary Acquisition

"My final point is that we need to encourage wide reading among all children so that all will benefit from contextual vocabulary growth...", concluded Chall (1983:15) in an address at an annual meeting of the International Reading Association. Evident in this statement is the relationship between wide reading and vocabulary growth. Chall explained the need for teaching students how to take advantage of contextual cues. In so doing, students are provided with the help required to

gain word meaning from the words encountered in reading. The various ways that information about a word is given in the context may include providing the word with a/an definition, synonym, summary, simile, example, appositive, or antonym. Students need to be aware of these cues used by authors and be encouraged to use them to aid in understanding the written text.

Although using the information provided in the text is the best strategy to use when confronting an unfamiliar word, according to Harris and Sipay (1985:457), "In order to make use of contextual and morphological cues to increase their vocabulary knowledge, students must read widely." The problem with the target group is that there is little motivation to read independently and as Harris and Sipay (1985:464) concluded,

> Those most in need of increasing their vocabulary are least likely to avail themselves of the opportunity to do so through reading, thus establishing a vicious cycle. Limited reading restricts the opportunity to learn new words, and failure to build up vocabulary knowledge hampers reading improvements.

Motivating students to read and providing time to do so needs to be a goal. Thus, the final strategy was to increase the time the target group spent on reading and

being read to aloud.

Conclusion

Evidence clearly demonstrates the direct relationship of reading comprehension to an individual's word meaning vocabulary. Reading specialists agree that improving a student's word meaning vocabulary is one means of improving the child's ability to make sense out of the printed page. The solution strategy utilized was a combination of recommended methods for improving students' vocabularies.

A program of direct vocabulary instruction was initiated. Numerous direct and vicarious learning experiences with the vocabulary concepts were incorporated into the lessons to provide the students with concrete experiences. These experiences were then drawn upon as the students used the vocabulary terms in numerous activities to reinforce the concepts. The highly recommended and effective techniques semantic feature analysis and semantic mapping were utilized in the instruction throughout the process. Both strategies were able to draw upon the students' past experiences and prior knowledge and integrate it into the new information introduced. The students gained ownership of the

vocabulary terms by using the words in peer and class discussions, writings, activities, and by becoming aware of the words in the everyday environment.

In addition to the direct instruction of vocabulary, students were encouraged to increase the time spent reading independently and being read to. Both activities are recognized as being an effective means of promoting vocabulary growth. Numerous reading materials which contained many of the vocabulary words were made available for independent reading. Magazines, articles, and books which addressed the concepts taught were read independently and as a group. During oral reading activities, attention was drawn to the contextual clues provided by the author. Students were taught to recognize and look for information provided in the context while reading independently or as a group. Promoting wide reading which encourages contextual vocabulary growth was an additional goal of the project.

The eclectic approach for improving the vocabulary of the fourth grade target students was selected as the most effective strategy. Each of the components were recognized as being effective tools for improving students' word meaning vocabularies in the content areas

and were combined to maximize the projects overall effectiveness.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Resources

The nature of the researcher's position, tutor to students in other instructors' classes, required the often times difficult coordination of participants' schedules. The researcher met with two groups, each composed of students who met the criteria outlined previously. The tutorial sessions ranged from 30 to 45 minutes and occurred on each Monday and Friday, with the exception of those weeks containing a holiday or a planning day on the scheduled days.

Unexpectedly, the new school year required the building facility to be filled to capacity and required using a less than ideal setting for the implementation. The sessions took place in a covered, open air corridor set apart from the main traffic areas. Although the area was away from the main traffic areas, numerous distractions throughout the sessions were endured. A

large table was used to accommodate the small groups. Due to the hands on nature of many of the activities, lack of sufficient working space also presented itself as a problem.

Although the researcher made arrangements the previous school year to use the facility, changes in available space the current school year made it impossible for the assistant principal to offer any other working environment. Attempts were made to secure a better environment to utilize during the implementation, but acceptable scheduling to accommodate all participants could not be reached. Even though the environment was not ideal, the small size of the group, the hands on, high interest nature of many of the activities, and the active and attentive participation by most of the participants provided an opportunity to accomplish the task at hand.

On days when a classroom was required due to inclement weather or the nature of the activity, special temporary arrangements were made. Schedules had to be changed in order to utilize a temporarily vacant classroom. The room was only available for 30 minutes, requiring the time allotments for that session to

decrease slightly. Even though the changes interrupted the continuity of the sessions, the arrangements fulfilled the temporary needs.

Due to the fact that the researcher was not the regular instructor, but would instead be acting as a volunteer tutor, incentives were sought from local businesses. The incentives would provide recognition of the participants for high scores attained on The Word Search Adventure (Appendix C:54), a program designed by the writer to monitor progress and provide motivation. Passes for a local tourist attraction and certificates for pizzas, hamburgers, and free merchandise were obtained. These incentives were used in conjunction with The Word Search Adventure program to motivate attendance, good behavior, and participation both during the tutorial sessions and with the optional, at home, activities and independent reading.

The Word Search Adventure booklets, pretest and posttest evaluation, and numerous at home reading materials and activities required a substantial number of copies to be made. Copies were requested of and provided by a local business to avoid the cost to the school. It was sought by the implementor to provide for

all needs required of the project, so as not to add any additional burden to a school within a system currently experiencing great financial burden.

Monitoring

The project timeline (Appendix E:59) was adhered to with the exception of the changes described. A program of direct vocabulary instruction which included numerous group and individual activities was carried out. An attempt was made to improve the target group's reading comprehension by increasing the word meaning vocabularies of the students in the group. The many activities planned such as group discussions based on semantic mapping and semantic feature analysis techniques, making educational posters, preparing and giving a class presentation, reading and responding to applicable reading selections, and observing and comparing actual objects occurred throughout weeks two through nine of the implementation period. Activities described in the timeline were followed except when inadequate conditions required the substitution of a comparable activity. During the sessions, most of the students participated enthusiastically, motivated by interest and enjoyment. The incentives were required, however, to motivate

students to do the optional practice activities and independent reading at home.

Careful planning included a systematic weekly monitoring of the students' progress which included the use of The Word Search Adventure Program. Inherent in the program was a point system used to determine the extent of the students' participation at home, in addition to monitoring students' attendance, behavior, and participation during the tutoring sessions. Points were earned each session for attendance, bringing supplies, active participation in activities, and good behavior. Points were also awarded for answering review questions correctly, properly completing tasks, winning educational games, correctly answering posttest questions, and completing optional at home activities. Booklets were collected weekly and each student's progress was evaluated and recorded by tallying the weekly points earned and recording the totals on a master list.

A midterm review and an informal evaluation were also made. Due to the small group size a clear indication of individual and group progress was determined. As indicated by the extremely low pretest

scores, information obtained by close observation and monitoring, and the informal midterm evaluation the decision was made to increase the time allotted for the science and social studies components of the practicum project by omitting the final mathematics portion. A holiday and two planning days occurring on three of the scheduled days, also made this change necessary. This adjustment to the project was made in the best interest of the students, so as to avoid the frustration of progressing too quickly. Therefore, an additional session was created to provide more practice with the numerous concepts being introduced. From the onset of the project the researcher recognized the limited time and contact with the target group as being a factor in the project.

Evaluation

Due to the eclectic nature of the project several means of assessing students' progress were utilized. The primary objective was to increase the students' word meaning vocabularies in the content areas. A vocabulary posttest was given to determine if the objective was met. The posttest was used as an assessment of the students' understanding of the vocabulary terms introduced during

the implementation period. If 80 percent of the target group members scored 75 percent or above, the objective would be met. The percentage of increase would also be noted. This was a significant factor since the pretest scores were exceptionally low.

Increasing the time a child spends reading independently was shown as being a viable means of improving vocabulary. Therefore, objective two stated that the participants would increase the time spent reading by 50 percent during the implementation period. This would be determined by comparing the reading survey results completed prior to the implementation period with the time logged in the Word Search Adventure booklets. The reading survey recorded student estimated times spent on independent reading the week prior to the project. Students responded to a survey that asked them to record whether 15 minutes or less, 15 to 30 minutes, 30 to 60 minutes, or other amount was spent reading independently or being read to the previous week. Although the exact amounts were not expected, an average weekly time spent on the activity was attempted to be determined. These results compared to the average time spent reading weekly as recorded in the booklets during the implementation

would determine if an increase had been made.

A direct program of vocabulary instructions was initiated. The teaching methods semantic mapping and semantic feature analysis were incorporated into the instruction. Each session the groups were introduced to the vocabulary terms and provided with opportunities to use the terms as outlined in the timeline. Objectives three and four were met by active student participation in the tutoring sessions. Careful recording of each student's attendance, behavior, and involvement was made. The objective required that 100 percent of the target group participate in the activities. Determination as to whether these objectives were met, was based on the careful observation and daily log recordings of the author.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The extent to which the previously specified objectives have been met in the investigation will be examined. The study set forth to determine whether or not the vocabulary teaching techniques presented would be successful in improving the below average students' word meaning vocabulary in the content area subjects. A vocabulary pretest and posttest comparison was used. In addition, the study attempted to reap the benefits of increased vocabulary for the students by initiating a program which encouraged wide reading among the participants. The study took place during the fall semester of the 1991 - 1992 school year.

Objective number one was met when 80 percent of the regular participants scored above 75 percent on the vocabulary posttest. Group One was composed of students one through nine and Group Two was composed of students ten through fourteen, shown in Table one. Both Groups showed a 63 percent increase in the posttest scores. An

average total group increase of 64 percent was shown in the posttest scores when compared to the pretest results. The results indicated only a slight difference between the groups' average increases in the posttest scores, but Group Two members had higher scores on the posttest. Two students did not complete the program due to a move and a conflict in special class schedules. Table one lists the pretest and posttest scores and shows the percentages of increase.

Table 1

Vocabulary Pre and Posttest Comparison for Fourth Grade Student

STUDENT	PRETEST	POSTTEST	PERCENT OF INCREASE
1	17	89	72
2	6	89	83
3	26	80	54
4	13	82	69
5	6	68	62
6	4	**	**
7	4	**	**
8*	2	61	59
9*	15	59	44
10	26	95	69
11	20	89	69
12	15	84	69
13	11	82	71
14	17	52	35

Two additional students, noted with asterisks, were not included as regular students. Although they met the criteria for participation in the program, both were learning disabled students who participated in special education classes, which required the students to be excused 15 minutes early each group session. Both exhibited enthusiasm for participating and were allowed to participate to the extent each was capable. Even though the scores obtained were not above 75 percent, as was the goal set forth, the improvement was significant considering the situation.

Monitoring of the student's behavior and participation demonstrated a direct link between inappropriate behavior and one of the two low scores. The student's talking and limited participation appeared to be a contributing factor of the lower score obtained. The student was easily distracted by any activity occurring outside of the group. The inadequate working environment certainly seemed to be detrimental to this student's ability to succeed.

Objective two was not met because 80 percent of the students did not show a 50 percent increase in time spent

reading independently at home. Although it was not a 50 percent increase, 64 percent of the students did show some increase in time spent reading at home. The remaining 36 percent of the students lost the reading logs or did not participate in the voluntary at home activity. Although some increase was noted in many of the participants, the objective's percentage was not met, as shown in table two.

Table 2

A Comparison of Minutes Spent Weekly on Independent Reading Prior to and During Implementation

STUDENT	SURVEY:PRIOR	LOG:DURING
1	15	18
2	60	70
3	10	28
4	60	70
5	45	102
6	60	*
7	15	18
8	180	*
9	75	*
10	150	*
11	*	*
12	15	*
13	60	*
14	30	*

The investigator cites some possible factors which may have contributed to the results of objective two.

First, the students met with great difficulty in keeping a reading log. Students often remarked that the reading had been done, but had not yet been recorded. It is doubtful that all of the independent reading accomplished was subsequently recorded. Second, the researcher's position as a tutor working with the students on a limited basis, made it difficult to offer encouragement and provide reading opportunities on a regular basis. The researcher also questions the validity of the students' responses on the initial reading survey. Since a relationship had not yet been established with the group, members may have overstated the time estimates.

Objectives three and four were met because all of the target group members participated in the vocabulary activities presented. Activities including semantic mapping and semantic feature analysis and numerous direct learning experiences were utilized in the sessions. Group discussions and activities featuring these techniques occurred throughout the practicum implementation as noted in the timeline. Careful observation and monitoring of the students were made to insure active participation by all.

In conclusion, all of the objectives were met, except one. The study demonstrated that the students' word meaning vocabularies in the content areas covered were increased. Even though all of the students did not score the 75 percent or above on the posttest, the small percent who did not, made large gains regardless. The second objective, although the goal was not met, did result in increased time spent on independent reading at home by many of the participants. Considering the many benefits derived from engaging students in wide reading, the investigator recognized any increase in the activity as a success. This is especially true since students' participation in the at home activity was strictly voluntary. The investigator set high goals for the participants, many of which were realized. Taking the target group into consideration is extremely pertinent when evaluating the results. The study had positive results with academically below average children. The investigator witnessed a definite increase in student confidence as the students found success in the program. Allowing the children to have challenges in which success was found, appeared to have had a significant positive impact on the participants.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improving students' reading comprehension continues to be a significant challenge. Increasing students' word meaning vocabularies is one accepted and recommended means of improving reading comprehension especially in the content area subjects. Students need to have increased vocabulary instruction and varied opportunities to use the new words. Conscientious effort to provide for the vocabulary deficits which exist needs to be continued. The program, due to time restraints only touched upon the problem that exists, but did demonstrate that the strategies used were effective in improving the target group members' vocabularies.

It is recommended that a program of direct vocabulary instruction which incorporates the strategies and guidelines outlined be continued throughout the school year in the content area subjects. The findings of the practicum study were presented to the assistant principal. Subsequently, a request was made to supply a report including an explanation of the strategies used

and the study's results to present at the next faculty meeting. A copy of the Word Search Adventure will be provided to the assistant principal and to the target group members' regular classroom teachers.

In addition, it is recommended that the teachers continue to emphasize a time period of silent sustained reading within the classroom, as well as continuing attempts to increase students independent reading at home. It is encouraged that further attempts be made to identify ways of motivating students to read independently both in school and at home.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Pretest

Appendix A
Pretest

Actual Pretest size is 8 1/2 " X 11"

NAME: _____

CONTENT AREA VOCABULARY PRETEST

ANIMALS

I. MATCHING: MATCH ITEMS IN COLUMN A WITH AN ITEM FROM COLUMN B

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
1. The natural home of an animal	____ A. gills
2. The traveling of an animal from one place to another and back again	____ B. habitat
3. An animal behavior that is not learned	____ C. species
4. A group of animals whose body temperature does not change with the environment's temperature	____ D. prey
5. An animal that hunts other animals for food	____ E. lungs
6. The part of some animals that take oxygen from the water	____ F. predator
7. Animals that do not have a backbone	____ G. invertebrate
8. A group of animals	____ H. migration
9. An animal that is hunted for food	____ I. instinct
10. To make more animals of the same kind	____ J. warm-blooded
11. A group of animals whose body temperature changes with the environment's temperature	____ K. reproduce
12. The part of some animals that take oxygen from the air	____ L. cold-blooded
13. Animals that have a backbone	____ M. vertebrate

II. MULTIPLE CHOICE: CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER.

14. The group of animals that begin life in the water and then live on land is called _____.
A. mammals B. amphibians C. fish D. reptiles

15. Warm-blooded animals that make milk for their young are called _____.
A. mammals B. amphibians C. fish D. reptiles

16. The frog is a/an _____.
A. mammal B. amphibian C. fish D. reptile

17. The lizard is a/an _____.
A. mammal B. amphibian C. fish D. reptile

18. An animal that eats meat only is _____.
A. omnivorous B. carnivorous C. herbivorous

19. An animal that eats plants only is _____.
A. omnivorous B. carnivorous C. herbivorous

20. An animal that eats both plants and animals is _____.
A. omnivorous B. carnivorous C. herbivorous

21. One characteristic of birds that no other animal has is that they _____.
A. lay eggs B. fly C. have feathers

III. FILL IN THE BLANK.

22. Some animals use lungs to take in the gas_____.

23. A fish eating a shrimp followed by an alligator eating the fish is an example of a _____ _____.

24. A frog's development from eggs, to tadpole, to adult frog having eggs is called an animal's _____ _____.

25. A gas given off by animals and used by plants to make food is called _____ _____.

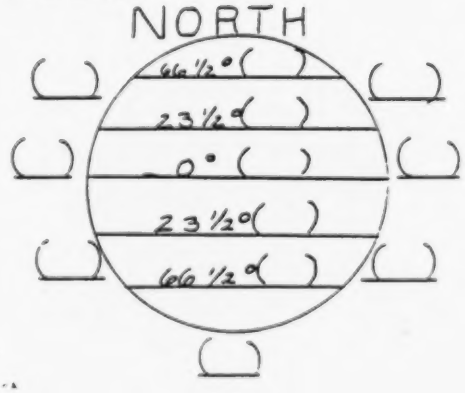
MAPS AND GLOBES

I. MATCHING: MATCH ITEMS IN COLUMN A WITH AN ITEM FROM COLUMN B

	COLUMN A		COLUMN B
1.	A flat drawing of the earth or some part of it	____ A.	compass rose
2.	Half of a globe	____ B.	tropics
3.	A sphere with a drawing of the earth	____ C.	compass
4.	The imaginary line marking at Greenvich, England from which longitude is measured	____ D.	map
5.	One of the seven main land masses	____ E.	peninsula
6.	A circle indicating directions	____ F.	hemisphere
7.	An instrument used for finding directions	____ G.	key
8.	The area from one tropic line to the other tropic line	____ H.	globe
9.	An area of land almost surrounded by water	____ I.	prime meridian
10.	The explanation for the symbols used on a map	____ J.	continent

LABEL EACH OF THE BLANKS WITH THE CORRECT LABEL

A. South
B. Northwest
C. Southeast
D. East
E. Northeast
F. West
G. Northeast
H. Equator
I. Antartic Circle
J. Tropic Of Cancer
K. Artic Circle
L. Tropic of Capricorn



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METRIC MEASUREMENT

I. MATCHING: MATCH ITEMS IN COLUMN A WITH AN ITEM FROM COLUMN B

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
1. The measurement of an object from end to end	____ A. liter
2. The measurement of the number of cubic units needed to fill a solid	____ B. perimeter
3. The metric scale used to measure temperature	____ C. gram
4. A metric unit used to measure liquids	____ D. length
5. A metric unit used to measure weight	____ E. meter
6. The distance around a figure or an area	____ F. area
7. A metric unit used to measure lengths	____ G. volume
8. The number of square units that cover a surface	____ H. celsius

II. MULTIPLE CHOICE: CIRCLE THE BEST ANSWER

9. The best metric unit for measuring the amount of water it takes to fill a bathtub would be _____.
A. milliliters B. grams C. millimeters D. liters

10. One gram is the weight of _____ milliliter(s) of water.
A. one B. ten C. one hundred D. one thousand

11. One hundred centimeters is equal to a _____.
A. millimeter B. meter C. kilometer

12. One thousand milligrams is equal to a _____.
A. gram B. centigram C. kilogram

III. FILL IN THE BLANK

13. An instrument used to measure the degree of hot or cold is called a/an _____.

14. An instrument used to measure the heaviness of an object is called a/an _____.

Appendix B

Posttest

Appendix B
Posttest

Actual Posttest size is 8 1/2 " X 11"

NAME_____

CONTENT AREA VOCABULARY POSTTEST

ANIMALS

I. MATCHING: MATCH ITEMS IN COLUMN A WITH AN ITEM FROM COLUMN B

COLUMN A		COLUMN B	
1.	An animal that eats only plants	____ A.	carnivorous
2.	The part of some animals that take oxygen from the water	____ B.	herbivorous
3.	The path by which each living thing is used as food by the next one in the series	____ C.	omnivorous
4.	Cold-blooded animals covered with hard dry scales	____ D.	mammal
5.	To make more animals of the same kind	____ E.	amphibian
6.	The natural home of an animal	____ F.	reptile
7.	An animal that eats both plants and animals	____ G.	food chain
8.	The part of some animals that take oxygen from the air	____ H.	life cycle
9.	Warm-blooded animals that have hair or fur and make milk for young	____ I.	habitat
10.	The group of animals whose name means 'two lives'	____ J.	reproduce
11.	Changes in an animal from an egg to an adult that produces more eggs	____ K.	lungs
12.	An animal that eats only meat	____ L.	gills

II. MULTIPLE CHOICE: CIRCLE THE BEST ANSWER

13. A group of animals traveling from one place to another and back again is called _____.
A. movement B. instinct C. migration D. flying

14. On cold days reptiles must go out into the sun to warm their bodies because they are _____.
A. cold-blooded B. warm-blooded C. temperate D. scaly

15. If a snake was chasing a mouse for dinner, the snake would be _____.
A. herbivorous B. prey C. predator D. not given

16. A human's average body temperature is 98.6 degrees in all seasons because they are _____.
A. cold-blooded B. warm-blooded C. temperate D. hairy

17. A rabbit being hunted by a hawk is considered the hawk's _____.
A. herbivore B. prey C. predator D. not given

18. An animal with a backbone is called a/an _____.
A. turtle B. amphibian C. vertebrate D. invertebrate

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III. TRUE OR FALSE: CIRCLE TRUE IF THE STATEMENT IS TRUE AND FALSE IF THE STATEMENT IS FALSE

19. Animals are considered consumers because they eat plants and other animals.
TRUE FALSE
20. An animal without a backbone is called a vertebrate.
TRUE FALSE
21. An animal behavior that is learned is called instinct.
TRUE FALSE
22. The only different characteristic of birds is that they are the only animals that can fly.
TRUE FALSE
23. Fish breathe with gills.
TRUE FALSE
24. A species is a group of animals with special characteristics.
TRUE FALSE

MAPS AND GLOBES

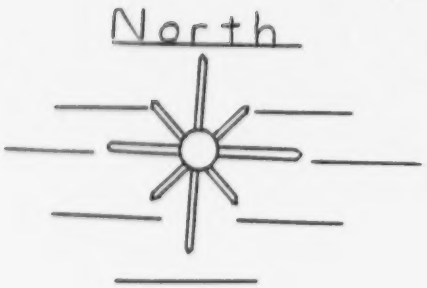
I. MATCHING: MATCH ITEMS IN COLUMN A WITH AN ITEM FROM COLUMN B

1.	An imaginary circle around the earth midway between the north and south poles	____A. Antarctic Circle
2.	The line located at Greenvich, England from which longitude is measured	____B. Tropic of Cancer
3.	Parallel of latitude 66 1/2 degrees north of the equator	____C. longitude
4.	Half of a round body, such as the earth	____D. hemisphere
5.	Parallel of latitude 23 1/2 degrees south of the equator	____E. Arctic Circle
6.	Distance on the earth's surface measured by degrees north or south from the equator	____F. Tropic of Capricorn
7.	Parallel of latitude 66 1/2 degrees south of the equator	____G. Equator
8.	Parallel of latitude 23 1/2 degrees north of the equator	____H. Prime Meridian
9.	Distance east or west on the earth's surface from the prime meridian	____I. latitude

II. TRUE OR FALSE: CIRCLE TRUE IF THE STATEMENT IS TRUE AND FALSE IF THE STATEMENT IS FALSE

10. A globe is a flat draving of the earth.
TRUE FALSE
11. A peninsula is completely surrounded by vater.
TRUE FALSE
12. The tropics is the area of land between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.
TRUE FALSE
13. A compass is an instrument for shoving directions.
TRUE FALSE

III. COMPLETE THE COMPASS ROSE



14. northwest
15. east
16. southwest
17. south
18. west
19. southeast
20. northeast

METRIC MEASUREMENT

I. MATCHING: MATCH ITEMS IN COLUMN A WITH AN ITEM FROM COLUMN B

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
1. The measurement of the heaviness of an object	____A. celsius
2. The measurement of an object from end to end	____B. scale
3. The number of square units that cover a surface	____C. volume
4. The distance around a figure or an area	____D. weight
5. A metric unit used to measure length	____E. liter
6. An instrument used to measure the degree of hot or cold	____F. gram
7. An instrument used to measure the heaviness of an object	____G. thermometer
8. The metric scale used to measure temperature	____H. area
9. A metric unit used to measure weight	____I. length
10. A metric unit used to measure liquid	____J. meter

II. TRUE OR FALSE: CIRCLE TRUE IF THE STATEMENT IS TRUE AND FALSE IF THE STATEMENT IS FALSE

11. One thousand milliliters is equal to one meter.
TRUE FALSE

12. One milliliter of water weighs one gram.
TRUE FALSE

13. The <u>best</u> metric way to measure the distance from Miami to California would be meters.
TRUE FALSE

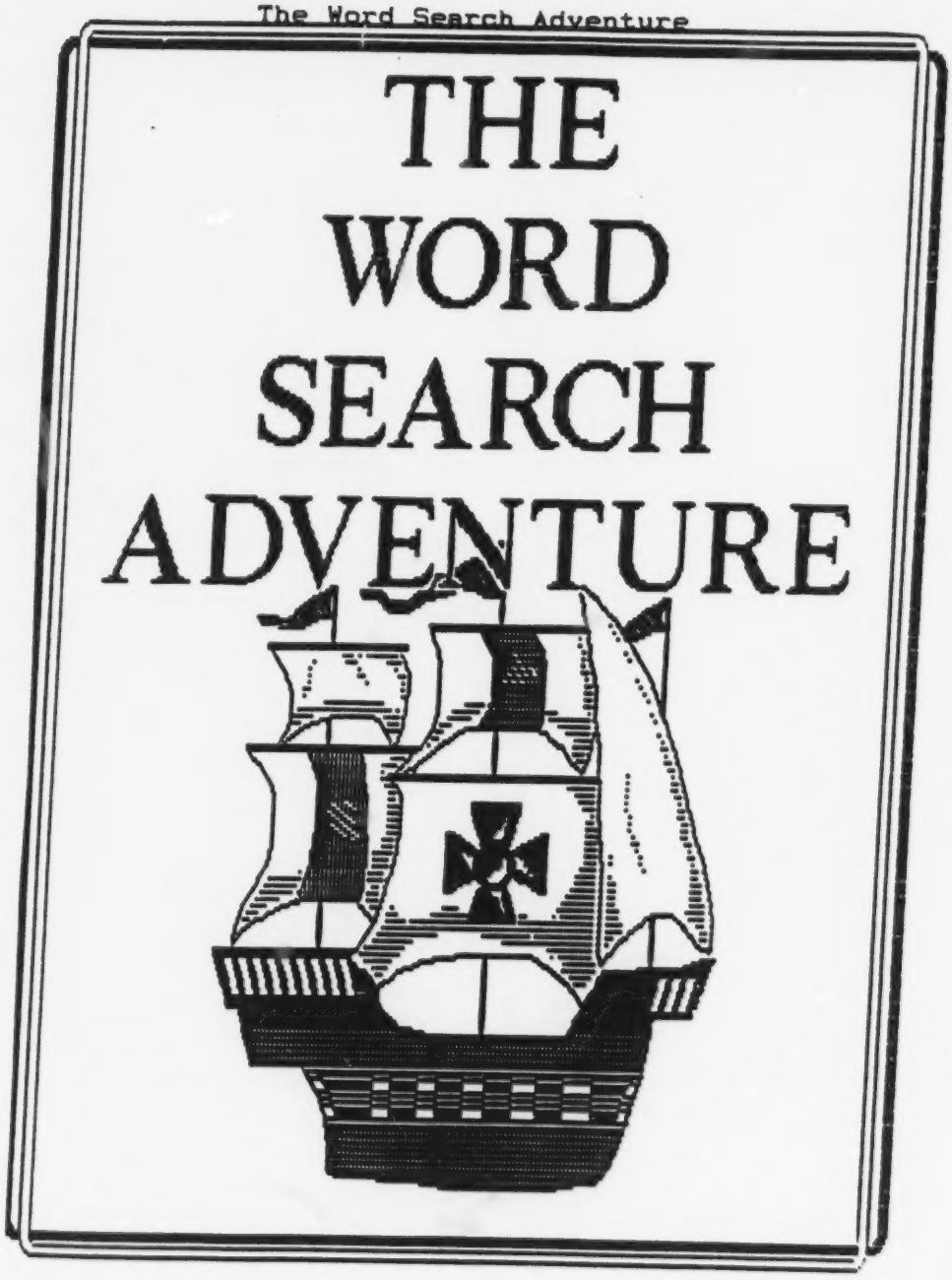
14. The <u>best</u> metric way to measure the amount of liquid in a small cup would be milliliters.
TRUE FALSE

15. I read more than I usually do during The Word Search Adventure.
TRUE FALSE

Appendix C

The Word Search Adventure

The Word Search Adventure



THE WORD SEARCH ADVENTURE

POINTS

(2)

A. FIND ANY VOCABULARY WORD IN A NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINE, BOOK, TEXTBOOK OR OTHER WRITTEN SOURCE: WRITE DOWN THE TITLE AND SENTENCE THAT THE WORD APPEARS IN.

B. HEAR TEACHER USE A VOCABULARY WORD IN CLASS: WRITE DOWN WORD AND SUBJECT WORD WAS HEARD IN •

C. USE A VOCABULARY WORD CORRECTLY IN A CREATIVE SENTENCE

(3)

A. TWENTY MINUTES OF SILENT READING : GIVE TITLE AND PAGES READ • (DO THIS FIVE DAYS OF ANY WEEK AND RECEIVE 15 BONUS POINTS)

B. TWENTY MINUTES OF BEING READ TO FROM A BOOK TOO DIFFICULT TO READ ALONE : GIVE TITLE AND PAGES READ •

C. COMPLETE ONE VOCABULARY WORKSHEET : 80 % CORRECT

(4)

A. GIVE A CORRECT ANSWER IN THE FINAL VOCABULARY CONTEST

(5)

A. BE IN CLASS

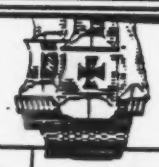
B. HAVE VOCABULARY RING AND PENCIL

C. GOOD BEHAVIOR

(6)

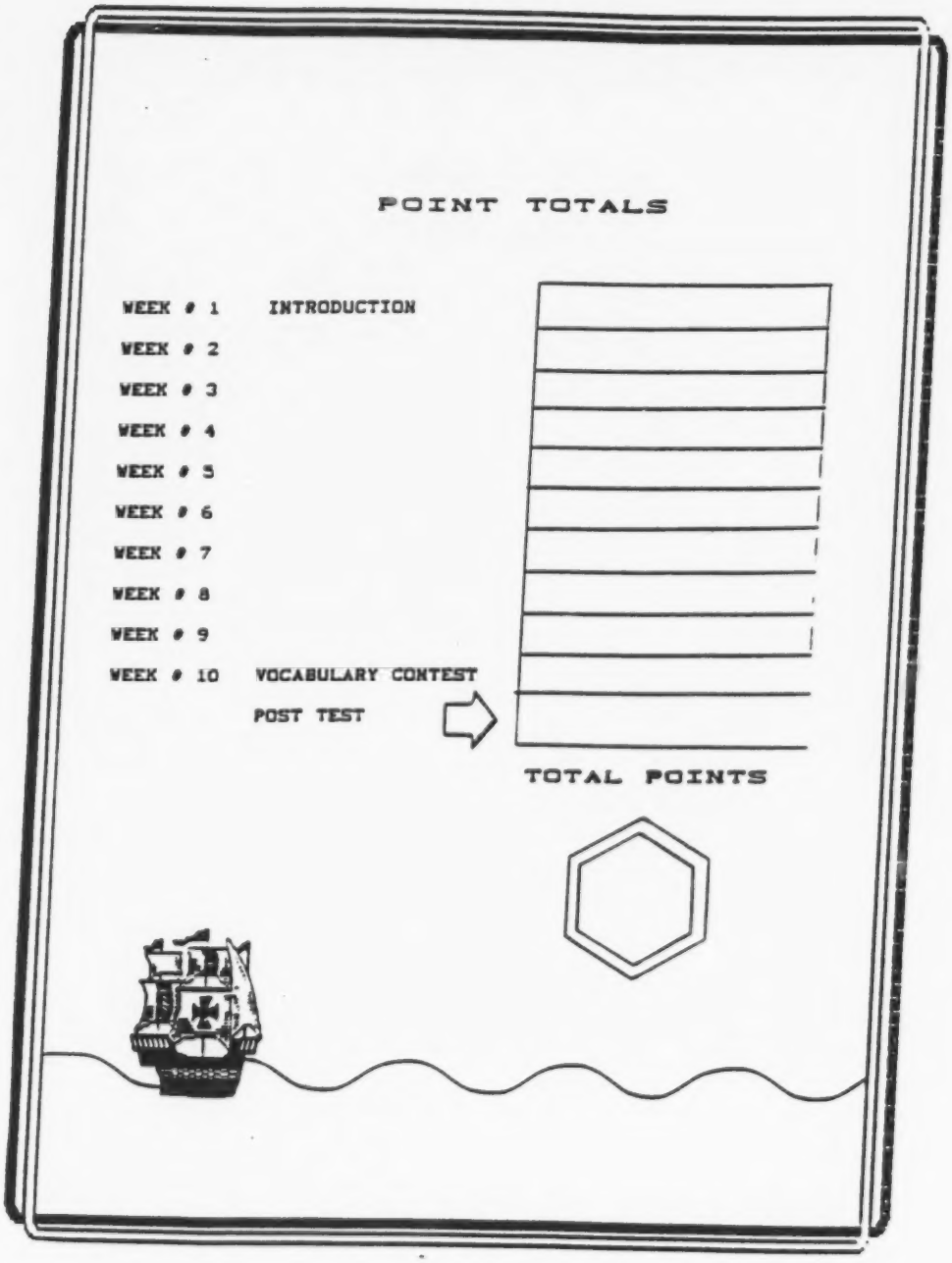
A. EACH CORRECT ANSWER ON POST TEST

• MUST HAVE TEACHER/PARENT INITIALS (THESE MAY BE CHECKED)
PENALTY 25 POINTS



WEEK #

DATE	INITIALS	ACTIVITY #	POINTS	INFORMATION


POINT TOTALS
WEEK # 1 INTRODUCTION
WEEK # 2
WEEK # 3
WEEK # 4
WEEK # 5
WEEK # 6
WEEK # 7
WEEK # 8
WEEK # 9
WEEK # 10 VOCABULARY CONTEST
POST TEST
TOTAL POINTS

Appendix D

Proposed Timeline For Practicum

Appendix D

Proposed Timeline for Practicum

WEEK ONE

Day One

Administer vocabulary pretest

Calculate scores and form groups

Day Two

Meet with groups to introduce procedures, goals, and rules of tutoring sessions

Distribute The Word Search Adventure booklet and give instructions for participation

Semantic mapping activity: introduction to animals

WEEK TWO

Day One

Observe samples of a vertebrate and an invertebrate

Define terms: vertebrate, invertebrate

Compose a list of animals as a group and classify under correct category

Read aloud: Jellyfish and Other Sea Creatures

Assign crossword puzzle 'What is a Fish?'

Day Two

Introduce terms: mammal, fish, reptile, amphibian, bird

Identify distinguishing characteristics of each group

Observe a live sample from each group and identify observable characteristics of each

Define terms: cold-blooded, warm-blooded, gills, lungs

Read article 'Too Hot, Too Cold, Just Right'

WEEK THREE

Day One

Make posters of animal groups: cut picture samples of each and label, list identifying characteristics of each group

Video: Tell Me Why: Prehistoric Animals, Reptiles and Amphibians (Volume 12) Recording time: 9:49 - 30:00

Day Two

Introduce the term food chain

Define terms: consumer, producer, predator, prey, instinct

Observe a live link in the food chain; label participants as predator, prey

Define terms: omnivorous, carnivorous, herbivorous

Read and discuss article 'Let's Eat'

Make a drawing of a portion of a food chain

WEEK FOUR

Day One

Define term: migration

Read Mysteries in Migration sections: Monarch and Whales Feed in Polar Regions

Semantic Feature Analysis with the terms (begin as a group and complete individually)

Video: Tell Me Why: Life Forms, Animals, and Animal Oddities (Volume Seven) Recording times:0 - 16:45

Day Two

Define term: life cycle

Read to class and discuss: Frogs and Toads and Monarch Butterfly

Play animal vocabulary board game

WEEK FIVE

Day One

Group in pairs and compose brief two minute talks on one of the following groups (mammal, reptile, amphibian, fish) and present to group

Oral review of terms introduced

Hand in The Word Search Adventure booklets to monitor progress

Day Two

Introduce maps and globes with a semantic mapping activity

Define terms: map, globe

Compare and note differences and similarities

Define and locate: oceans, continents, hemispheres, equator, Tropic of Cancer, Tropic of Capricorn, tropics,Arctic Circle, Antarctic Circle, peninsula

Label each on a personal map

WEEK SIX

Day One

Define and locate intermediate and cardinal directions on a compass rose

Demonstrate procedure for using a compass

Locate and label directions in the room

Assemble world map puzzles and locate terms

Day Two

Define terms: latitude, longitude, prime meridian

Demonstrate how to use latitude and longitude markings to locate a place on a map or globe

Activity: Using the latitude and longitude markings locate the countries of various

foreign coins and attach the coins to the world map at the proper location

WEEK SEVEN

Day One

Define terms: key, symbol, legend

Students will use various maps to obtain information

Do a semantic feature activity with features discussed and a class provided list of locations from a map

Day Two

Introduce metric measurement using semantic mapping

Introduce metric measures for length: meter, centimeter

Make centimeter rulers and meter strings

Guess and measure various objects

Metric Scavenger Hunt: Students search for items that measure the lengths on their Metric Scavenger Hunt Cards and use centimeter rulers and meter strings to measure items

Define term: perimeter

Measure perimeters of given objects

WEEK EIGHT

Day One

Introduce metric measurement for volume: liter, milliliter

Make cubic centimeters and a liter container

Guess and measure volumes of various containers

Game: Students write down an estimate of volume for a given container, container's content is measured and the closest estimate gets a point

Day Two

Introduce metric measures for weight: gram, kilogram

Guess and measure weights of various objects

Activity: Students are given a mystery list of weights and must weigh objects to locate the items that match the mystery list weights

Have students who choose to, weigh themselves and place weights on a group graph of weights

WEEK NINE

Day One

Introduce metric measures for temperature: degrees celsius

Demonstrate proper use and reading of body, weather, and cooking thermometers

Record various temperatures using the various types of thermometers

Activity: Draw an outdoor activity for various celsius temperatures

Day Two

Peer practice of vocabulary terms

Vocabulary Contest

WEEK TEN

Day One

Administer Vocabulary Posttest

Day Two

Combined Groups: Awards and Certificate presentation